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DUTY MODULES: AN APPROACH TO THE IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION--ETC(U)  
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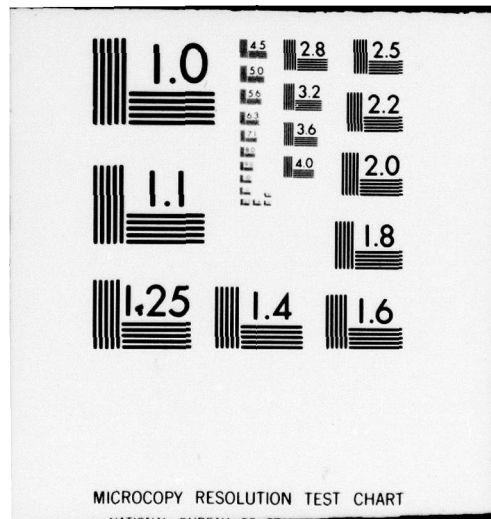
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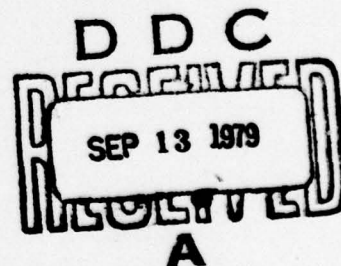
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**DUTY MODULES: AN APPROACH TO THE  
IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF  
PERSONNEL RESOURCES AND  
REQUIREMENTS**

Bertha H. Cory and Cecil D. Johnson  
Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences  
and  
Arthur L. Korotkin and Robert W. Stephenson  
American Institutes for Research

PERSONNEL AND MANPOWER TECHNICAL AREA

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U. S. Army  
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June 1979

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM	
1. REPORT NUMBER Technical Paper 367	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. REPORT'S CATALOG NUMBER 9	
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) DUTY MODULES: AN APPROACH TO THE IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF PERSONNEL RESOURCES AND REQUIREMENTS.		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Final Technical Report.	
7. AUTHOR(s) Bertha H. Cory, Cecil D. Johnson (ARI); Arthur L. Korotkin, Robert W. Stephenson (AIR)		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER --	
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS American Institutes for Research 1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW Washington, DC 20007		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s) DAHC19-71-C-0004	
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences 5001 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22333		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS 2Q762717A766	
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office) 12 24p.		12. REPORT DATE June 1979	
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 14	
		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) Unclassified	
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE --	
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)  Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.			
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)  --			
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES  --			
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Duty module Job description Job analysis Personnel management Manpower requirements Manpower resources Performance evaluation Management information systems			
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) A job analysis concept was developed for representing work activities at a level more specific than a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) and more general than a "task." This early phase of the research was intended to (a) develop and refine the concept, (b) develop methods and formats for applying the concept to Army jobs, and (c) provide an evaluation of its feasibility and utility for analyzing Army jobs. Specifically, the research evaluated the feasibility of using a set of duty modules to adequately (Continued)			

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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE(When Data Entered)

Item 20 (Continued)

represent duty positions of members of an infantry platoon and of using job content data, expressed in duty module format, as a basis for evaluating unit performance.

The basic procedure in developing a duty module consisted of having Army occupational analysts examine task inventory and/or job analysis data for several different specialties and grouping together those tasks which appeared to cluster together in a meaningful way, primarily occupational homogeneity. Ideally, duty modules should be mutually exclusive; they should not encompass, overlap, or depend on other modules. They must be specific enough to describe the essential, significant, and continuing work activities of a position and, at the same time, be general enough to apply across various positions and occupational specialties.

Thirty-one enlisted and 93 officer duty modules were developed, field tested, and revised. Field reactions were highly favorable to using the officer duty modules to describe work activity requirements. In addition, techniques for employing duty modules to describe both unit capabilities and performance worked well when subjected to a pilot test during a field training exercise. The use of duty modules in describing jobs, setting requirements, and evaluating unit and job performance is promising.

The report is written for behavioral psychologists.

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DDC TAB	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Technical Paper 367**

# **DUTY MODULES: AN APPROACH TO THE IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF PERSONNEL RESOURCES AND REQUIREMENTS**

Bertha H. Cory and Cecil D. Johnson  
Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences  
and  
Arthur L. Korotkin and Robert W. Stephenson  
American Institutes for Research

Submitted by:  
Ralph R. Canter, Chief  
**PERSONNEL AND MANPOWER TECHNICAL AREA**

Approved By:

E. Ralph Dusek, Director  
**PERSONNEL AND TRAINING  
RESEARCH LABORATORY**

Joseph Zeidner  
**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**

**U.S. ARMY RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR THE BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
5001 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22333

Office, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel  
Department of the Army

**June 1979**

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Army Project Number  
2Q762717A766

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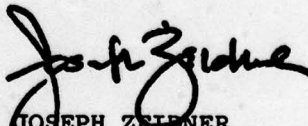
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## FOREWORD

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The Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) has pioneered in developing the concept of the duty module, an aid to military manpower selection, assignment, training, and performance evaluation. A duty module groups important related job activities into a distinctive, codifiable cluster, more specific than a Military Occupational Specialty and more general than a single task, that may apply to a number of different positions. This report documents an early stage of the research, describing the concept, using it to develop 124 officer and enlisted personnel duty modules, and evaluating its feasibility and potential usefulness to the Army.

Research on duty modules was done primarily by personnel of ARI's Personnel and Manpower Technical Area, augmented by contracts with organizations selected for their ability in the field. This report is based in part on work done by the American Institutes for Research under contract DAHC19-71-C-0004. The research was done under Army Project 2Q762717A766 and is responsive to requirements of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER) in support of the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) and the Enlisted Personnel Management System (EPMS).

  
JOSEPH ZELDNER  
Technical Director



## DUTY MODULES: AN APPROACH TO THE IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF PERSONNEL RESOURCES AND REQUIREMENTS

### BRIEF

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#### Requirement:

To develop an approach for describing jobs to represent work activities at a level more specific than a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) and more general than a task, for use in selection, assignment, training, and performance evaluation. This phase of the research was conducted to (a) develop and refine the concept of a duty module, (b) develop methods and formats for applying the concept to Army jobs, and (c) to provide an evaluation of the concept's feasibility and utility for describing Army jobs.

#### Procedure:

Army occupational analysts examined task inventory and job analysis data for a variety of specialties. Tasks which appeared to cluster together were grouped together, primarily with respect to occupational homogeneity. Ideally, duty modules should be mutually exclusive; they should not overlap or depend on each other in any way. They must be specific enough to describe the essential, significant, and continuing work activities of a position, but also be general enough to apply to various positions and occupational specialties.

In this phase of the research, 31 enlisted and 93 officer duty modules were developed, field tested, and revised. The research also evaluated the feasibility of using a set of duty modules to represent duty positions of 334 enlisted infantry company personnel and 518 officers in Infantry and Quartermaster Branches and of using job content data expressed in duty module format as a basis for evaluating unit performance.

#### Findings:

Field reactions were highly favorable to using the officer duty modules to describe work activity requirements. In addition, techniques for using duty modules to describe unit capabilities and performance worked well when subjected to a pilot test during a field training exercise. Duty modules appeared to show promise in describing jobs, setting requirements, and evaluating unit and job performance.

### Utilization of Findings:

The duty module methodology has been used to define performance requirements for Army officer assignments, in support of the Officer Personnel Management System. The concept may be usable along a wide range of Army personnel and manpower problems. Recent exploratory research by the Review of Education and Training for Officers (RETO) study group identified the utility of defining all officer duty positions in terms of component duty modules and interrelationships of duty modules, in relation to training requirements and best training methods.

Before the duty module concept is ready for broad implementation, however, methods for weighting the importance and criticality of module subelements must be developed, as well as indices of commonality between different duty modules. New job descriptions, requirements, and performance evaluation techniques based on the duty module approach must be developed and evaluated for effectiveness and implications for long-range Army personnel/manpower policy goals.



DUTY MODULES: AN APPROACH TO THE IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION  
OF PERSONNEL RESOURCES AND REQUIREMENTS

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DUTY MODULES: AN APPROACH TO THE IDENTIFICATION AND  
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AND REQUIREMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Personnel concerned with the manpower problems of selection, assignment, training, and performance assessment need an adequate means to describe Army jobs. Job descriptions now available are not standardized, and they range from gross overall representations of the job to highly detailed descriptions of task elements comprising the job. The task elements involved tend to be too numerous and too varied in their level of detail across the spectrum of jobs. At the other end of the scale, gross descriptions like the Army's Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) system are too general, providing only limited information for selection, assignment, training (other than with regard to a specific MOS), and the establishment of manpower requirements.

A system is needed for describing and classifying jobs at a level detailed enough to provide the required information without being cumbersome and complicated. Such a system would provide a common language useful to individuals concerned with setting job requirements and those concerned with supplying the personnel resources to fill these requirements. Although such a system would have general applicability to the workplace, it would be especially useful in the Army, which undergoes continual adjustments in the training and utilization of personnel resources.

A job analysis concept, termed a duty module, for representing work activities at a level more specific than an MOS and more general than a task was developed. The purpose of this phase of the research was to (a) develop and refine the concept, (b) develop methods and formats for applying the concept to Army jobs, and (c) provide an evaluation of its feasibility and utility for analyzing Army jobs. Specifically, the current phase evaluated the feasibility of using a set of duty modules to adequately represent duty positions of members of an infantry platoon and of using job content data, expressed in duty module format, as a basis for evaluating unit performance.

PROCEDURE

Two experimental sets of job-descriptive duty modules were developed. The basic procedure consisted of examining task inventory and job analysis data for several different specialties and grouping together the tasks that appeared to cluster together in a meaningful way, primarily in occupational homogeneity. Ideally, each duty module is mutually exclusive and does not encompass, overlap, or depend on any other duty module. Each module must be specific enough to



describe the essential, significant, and continuing work activities of a position. At the same time, a module must be general enough to apply across various positions and occupational specialties. One set of duty modules was developed for officer jobs and another set was developed for enlisted personnel jobs. Several modules were initially designed by skilled job analysts familiar with Army jobs.

From these tentative modules, task inventories were assembled and administered to 334 enlisted infantry company personnel and 518 Infantry and Quartermaster Branch officers. The component tasks comprising each module were studied statistically for "probability of association" in actual field tests; that is, the empirical and logical relationships of the tasks in the actual work situation were determined. On the basis of these analyses, the duty modules were revised.

The duty modules were then reviewed for comprehensiveness and utility for personnel objectives in selected organizational units. Unit mission statements were prepared in which the relationship between duty modules and the capabilities of organizational units was indicated.

Finally, to assess the feasibility of using duty modules as an aid in evaluating unit performance, Army field umpires, who typically evaluate unit performance in Army Training Tests (ATTs), were provided with checklists and rating forms developed from a selected sample of applicable duty modules. These new checklists and forms were tested during the actual ATT for 15 infantry platoons.

#### THE DUTY MODULE CONCEPT

Although it was generally agreed that a new level of job description was necessary to be useful to persons dealing with resources and persons dealing with requirements, the design of a duty element was unresolved.

Based on synthesis of available data, an approach to structuring the description of work activities evolved; the following design criteria were applied: (a) the duty element must be meaningful and useful to requirements planners; (b) the duty element must be compatible with assignment practices in the field; and (c) the duty element must remain essentially the same, even though different aspects of an organization's mission are undertaken.

All three design criteria were implicitly concerned with probability of association among tasks under different sets of circumstances. The task clusters that resulted from the application of these design criteria were intended to be self-contained independent units of work that would be modular in the sense that they could be used as "plug-in" units to a variety of different occupational specialties. They were termed duty modules.



The design criteria were translated into the following developmental process: First, insure that personnel resource and manpower requirement planners agree on the qualification requirements needed to do a given job. Second, demonstrate compatibility with work practices in the field. For this, actual survey data regarding the way in which tasks are assigned in the field should be reviewed. Third, assure that the module is related to the capabilities of various levels of organizational units (e.g., that it represents the mission statement in terms of duty modules).

#### The Development of Duty Modules

The duty module concept was developed further through a series of interrelated ARI projects. In all, 93 officer duty modules and 31 enlisted duty modules were developed from the results of job analyses conducted on 518 infantry and quartermaster officers and 334 enlisted infantry personnel. Reports on the duty module concept include treatment of its rationale (Miller, 1971; Stephenson, 1972); procedures (Hadley, 1973); and evaluation (Sitterson & Wintersteen, 1974).

The current procedure used for developing duty modules is a pragmatic one. It was shaped to a great extent by the means and resources that were available, convenient, and expeditious. Although care was taken to insure accuracy and consistency, the development cycle was not tightly bound by inviolate steps and procedures. Nevertheless, certain working criteria were developed to assist in building and standardizing duty modules. Some of the more salient of these are (Sitterson & Wintersteen, 1974):

1. To be valid, the duty modules for any given position must be accurate and sufficient in describing the essential, truly significant, continuing work activity requirements of the position.
2. To be modular and useful, duty modules must be standardized to apply across a variety of different positions and occupational specialties, insofar as those positions actually have task clusters in common.
3. Each duty module should be a self-contained functional entity. It must not encompass, overlap, or depend on another duty module assigned to the same position.
4. A duty module should represent a distinctive, coherent, and important part of the position, important in terms either of criticality or proportion of time spent on it.
5. A duty module should represent an integral part of the position, usually part of the primary duty assignment.

### Enlisted Duty Modules

The first task in the development of enlisted duty modules was to design provisional modules from task statements for a selected number of MOS. These task statements were taken from the Military Occupations Data Bank (MODB), which was designed and is maintained by the Office of Personnel Operations (OPO) (now part of the U.S. Army Military Personnel Center). MODB is a computer-oriented information system for the gathering, storing, retrieving, and summarizing of occupational data (Davis, 1969). The current version (MODB-1)<sup>1</sup> contains information on more than 80,000 tasks that describe several hundred MOS (Meyer, 1968; 1969a; 1969b; 1969c).

Task inventories for a variety of different MOS were obtained. The tasks were grouped together in terms of the qualification requirements for different specialties and types of units. If, for example, a vehicle driver must be able to perform certain kinds of vehicle maintenance, one might include some maintenance tasks in the definition of a duty module associated with driving the vehicle. Some tasks, of course, would be reserved for maintenance specialists and would not be required of the vehicle driver. The Army has experience in dividing up such responsibilities, and the best starting point for the design of systems-related job content modules of the type proposed was to let persons who design Army training course curriculums organize task statements into job-content modules.

Hadley (1973) has pointed out that job analyses designed primarily for personnel management purposes, such as the preparation of duty modules, are not suitable for training course curriculum construction. Personnel management is generally concerned with the similarities among jobs, whereas the training course curriculum builder is more interested in the differences among jobs. This does not mean that job analysis and the resulting duty modules are not extremely useful in making decisions concerning training and utilization of personnel, particularly in the case of "skill" courses rather than courses of a developmental or career building type. In skill courses, duty modules can be directly employed in such decisions as transferability, or "trade-off," of personnel from old to new equipment, determination of whether schooling for a new job can be conducted on the job or must be formal classroom training, and in selection of the aptitudes and job experience required for entrance to training in a new or greatly modified skill.

Initial work on enlisted duty modules was conducted by experts working with punched cards on which the various MODB task statements had been keypunched. Many of the task statements were discarded for various reasons, since MODB had been developed on a crash time schedule

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<sup>1</sup>Department of the Army Regulation 611-3. Personnel Selection and Classification: Military Occupational Data Bank (MODB), 6 November 1969.



and the preference had been to gather an excess of data rather than not enough. Other task statements were found to be redundant and were grouped together. Some of the more minor tasks were combined, and a new task statement was prepared. Conversely, some of the more complicated task statements were divided into component tasks to be more consistent in scope with other task statements in the inventory.

The important point about these task grouping and task redefinition activities is that they were not based upon a single MOS. In order to make task statements "modular" in the sense that they have equivalent meaning in several different occupational specialties, both related and different MOS were considered. The MOS chosen initially were all the MOS involved in an armored cavalry reconnaissance platoon; later, the focus was on an infantry rifle company, and additional MOS were added. Finally, some MOS were added in an effort to reflect job content of enlisted staff positions one echelon above the units being studied. In all, 16 enlisted MOS were studied:

- 11B, Light Weapons Infantryman
- 11C, Infantry Indirect Fire Crewman
- 11D, Armor Reconnaissance Specialist
- 11E, Armor Crewman
- 11F, Infantry Operations and Intelligence Specialist
- 11G, Infantry Senior Sergeant
- 11H, Infantry Direct Fire Crewman
- 31B, Field Radio Mechanic
- 31G, Tactical Communication Chief
- 36K, Field Wireman
- 63C, Track Vehicle Mechanic
- 71B, Clerk-Typist
- 71H, Personnel Specialist
- 76A, Supplyman
- 76Y, Armorer-Unit Supply Specialist
- 94B, Cook

A total of 31 enlisted job content modules were identified. These 31 enlisted modules were considered to account for all the job-content qualification requirements for the 16 different MOS used in the design process.

The enlisted duty modules derived were then subjected to the review of 30 enlisted men at Fort Myer, Va., and 30 enlisted men at Fort Meade, Md. They read the modular descriptions of their MOS and judged whether each module was appropriate and whether additional modules were needed to fully describe their MOS. The duty modules were then revised and were ready for field testing.

### Field Test and Application

The objective of the field test was to determine the suitability of using job content data expressed in duty module format as a basis for predicting and evaluating unit performance. It was thought that a field test exercise would provide a vehicle for applying in a concrete situation the concepts developed. The field test had two objectives:

1. To obtain further construct validity data from MOS incumbents that the duty modules assigned could be used to describe their duty positions fully and completely.
2. To determine the applicability of duty modules in improving the accuracy, specificity, and objectivity of both individual and unit proficiency measures in an Army Training Test (ATT) situation. A plan was prepared for the field testing of duty modules so as to produce the statistically reliable data necessary for empirical verification. Although initial plans called for tryout with 30 rifle platoons, only 15 were available because of a current policy of decentralized training responsibility and a heavy ROTC camp commitment.

Arrangements were made for the collection of data just prior to the ATTs for five infantry rifle companies (representing the 15 platoons). A total of 334 enlisted personnel completed task inventory surveys in which they indicated the extent to which they performed each duty module, as well as each task within each duty module. The packaged survey presented to each enlisted person included task inventory pages for the duty modules that had been designated a priori as appropriate for his MOS. He was then asked to check one of the following four categories to describe his activities in each task that defined a given module: supervise, do and supervise, do, and assist. An example of a duty module and the task inventory format is shown in Figure 1. (Over 80% of the tasks in each module were checked by those designated as responsible for performing the tasks. Virtually every task in each duty module was checked at at least one level.)

### Application of Duty Modules in Field Evaluation

Army Training Tests are formal tests administered to evaluate the combat readiness of a newly trained unit. Each ATT has a highly detailed scenario (e.g., attack, retrograde defense), a checklist for evaluating performance during the test, instructions for umpires, and other requirements. Many phases of a test are concerned with a specific capability of the unit involved. Moreover, the information in the scenario is at such a level of detail that the activities of various members of the unit can be readily translated into tasks and duty modules. It was hypothesized that a "modularized" scoring sheet (i.e., tasks grouped by duty modules) would enable the umpires to be



**AIR Duty Module Survey Form (Rev 1974)**
**Date:** January 1976

**Code:**
**Identification No.** \_\_\_\_\_

DUTY MODULE 0-A-2 Performs general administration		(8) Direct	(4) Supervise	(3) Do and supervise	(2) Do	(1) Assist	(0) Not applicable
0014	Prepare administrative SOPs and instruction.						
0015	Monitor security of classified documents.						
0003	Prepare and review administrative correspondence, memoranda, and reports.						
0006	Establish and monitor arrangements for collection and distribution of mail within unit.						
0008	Screen incoming correspondence and distribute for action or information.						
0017	Establish and operate suspense system.						
0018	Authenticate orders and official correspondence.						
0019	Establish and post files of records and regulations.						
0012	Review, interpret and apply directives and information.						
0020	Schedule appointments, conferences, and other such activities.						
0021	Provide for reproduction and duplication services.						
0004	Prepare and review unit journal, historical records and morning report (or change reports for centralized systems).						
0005	Administer unit funds.						
0007	Establish and operate unit message center.						
0013	Prepare daily bulletin or similar publication.						

1. DO MODULE AND TASKS APPLY TO YOUR POSITION	(0) Not applicable	(1) Little applicability	(2) Several of tasks	(3) Majority of tasks	(4) All of tasks		
a. In actual or simulated combat operations and support?							
b. In garrison and other than a?							
2. PERCENT OF TOTAL TIME SPENT ON THIS DUTY MODULE	(0) Not applicable	(1) 1-9%	(2) 10-29%	(3) 30-49%	(4) 50-69%	(5) 70-89%	(6) 90-100%
a. In actual or simulated combat operations and support?							
b. In garrison and other than a?							
3. RELATIVE CRITICALITY OF THIS PART (MODULE) TO ENTIRE JOB	(0) Not applicable	(1) Least critical	(2) Average	(3) Critical	(4) The most critical		
a. In actual or simulated combat operations and support?							
b. In garrison and other than a?							

Figure 1. Example of duty module used in field testing.



more accurate, objective, and detailed in their evaluation. The information on specific shortcomings rated on the module scoring sheet could be used to improve subsequent performance.

The objective of the module scoring plan was to determine the applicability of duty modules as a proficiency measurement technique in an ATT situation. Both individual performance and unit effectiveness were measured. Unit umpires completed score sheets on both individuals and units, using the prepared instructions and categories, under the guidance of American Institutes for Research (AIR) field representatives. Umpires completed both the forms developed by AIR and their own unit score sheets normally used for the official grading. Two AIR representatives accompanied the platoons through the field tests.

As stated previously, 31 enlisted duty modules and 93 officer duty modules had been developed for infantry personnel. These were designed for duty assignments at the company level, but with some coverage at the battalion echelon. These duty modules described the complete spectrum of tasks performed by infantry enlisted personnel at that level. In a given ATT, only certain duty modules were expected to be applicable. Only eight of the enlisted modules and two of the officer modules were found to be applicable. They were as follows:

<u>Enlisted duty module no.</u>	<u>Title</u>
A-2	Performs unit supervision and control of personnel.
C-1	Operates unit tactical communications equipment (excluding use of Morse code).
E-1	Prepares and employs maps, charts, and instruments in land navigation.
E-4	Emplaces, reports, and neutralizes tactical obstacles.
E-7	Participates in ground tactical operations as member of a maneuver unit.
E-9	Engages enemy in close combat with individual weapons and machine guns.
E-10	Engages enemy with recoilless rifles and direct fire missiles.
G-1	Performs user maintenance on individual and unit equipment and weapons (excluding motor vehicles).

Officer duty  
module no.

Title

0-U-1	Directs and controls tactical employment of unit.
0-X-1	Participates individually and directly in ground combat.

The umpires who scored the platoon's performance during the ATT were asked to evaluate the enlisted personnel in the platoon with respect to each relevant task in each of the eight duty modules that were applicable to the ATT.

Platoon overall scores achieved under the new procedures were generally consistent with those derived under the standard Army "adjectival" rating procedure. Differences may be attributable to the greater specificity of the modular system as contrasted with the reliance upon "overall" judgment in the Army system. Under the modular evaluation, three platoons achieved an overall grade of "superior," and the rest attained an overall grade of "satisfactory"; under the Army adjectival rating system (converted to numerical grades), one platoon received a grade of "superior" and the rest attained the grade of "satisfactory."

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A major product of this research was the development of a technique for identifying and classifying work activities at a level somewhere between a job and a task. This new concept has been termed duty module. The duty module can be applied in areas of both manpower requirements and personnel resources, facilitating communication between those involved in both the supply and demand levels of personnel management. Among possible duty module applications is the more objective and precise definition of training requirements and of individual and unit performance evaluations.

Duty modules are defined primarily in terms of "probability of association" among tasks (where the tasks in particular job areas tend to cluster logically and/or statistically together over a wide variety of jobs). Modules are developed by examining task inventory and/or field job analysis data for a variety of different occupational specialties. A new duty module is examined for compatibility with field assignment practices and actual utilization of personnel and MOS in individual Army units. This developmental process is continued until the duty module is established as a common element of work activity description for both personnel resources and manpower requirements.



Two experimental sets of duty modules were developed, one for officers and one for enlisted personnel. These modules were initially designed by grouping together tasks after examining detailed task inventory and/or job analysis data for a variety of different occupational specialties. Task inventories based upon the tentative duty modules were then administered to 334 enlisted infantry company personnel and 518 Infantry and Quartermaster Branch officers. The component tasks defining each module were studied for probability of association, and the duty modules were revised. The modules were then evaluated in terms of their comprehensiveness and utility for manpower planning purposes by preparing unit capability tables in which the relationship between duty modules and the mission statements for organizational units was indicated. The umpires conducting ATTs for 15 infantry platoons were then asked to describe the performance of the officers and enlisted personnel in duty module terms by using checklists and rating forms specifically developed for that purpose. The relationships between duty module performance and the test scores received by the unit as a whole were then examined.

Thirty-one enlisted and 93 officer job content modules were developed in the manner described. Field reactions to using the duty modules as a way of describing work activity requirements were found to be favorable, and procedures for relating duty module performance to unit performance were identified.

The duty module concept appears to be viable and valuable. The possibilities for improving both officer and enlisted job structure are promising and further work on the development of duty modules appears justified. The ATT results suggest that the duty module concept may well have a role in performance evaluation. Its applicability to periodic efficiency reports should be explored. A number of innovative personnel system techniques and procedures can be designed from the duty module concept, and some of these (e.g., improved specification of training requirements) are now within the current state-of-the-art. However, note that, since duty modules are intended to be generally applicable to virtually all occupational specialties, much of the future work must extend the duty module concept to other officer branches and enlisted occupational specialties. There is further need to evaluate the duty module concept in terms of its implications for various kinds of management decisionmaking.

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